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ABSTRACT
        Students' non-participation in tutorials seems to be
more widespread in certain cultural environments than others. This
paper investigates the usefulness and effectiveness of tutorials as
pedagogical tools and cultural links. It is postulated that the
conflict results from face-considerations and the students'
definition of tutorials within an inadequate cultural framework that
makes no distinction between the constructions of face in the wide
and narrow contexts of town and gown, respectively. Face is defined
as the base-level dignity and respectability that individuals and
groups seek to defend instinctively as operators within a social
framework. This pedagogical framework also recognizes an
"Expert-Novice" relationship within which information flows
uni-directionally from the first participant to the second, in
consonance with the power-structure of the larger speech community of
which universities form a component. However, an unacknowledged
subculture also exists, the Equal Opportunity Zone (EOZ). In the EOZ,
information should move bi-directionally; town and gown diverge in
their power structure patterns in that some power and control devolve
on the students. Resolution of this culture-pedagogy conflict may be
found by characterizing the sociolinguistic domain of education in
such a way that the tutorial classroom is seen as a sub-cultural
context with its own appropriateness rules. (Contains 10 references.)
(Author/NAV)

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ED 397 637

CULTURE AND PEDAGOGY IN CONFLICT: AN INVESTIGATION OF STUDENT-PARTICIPATION IN THE LANGUAGE TUTORIAL CLASSROOM[1]

Abstract

Students' non-participation in tutorials seems to be more widespread in certain cultural environments than others thus creating a need to investigate its usefulness cum effectiveness as a pedagogic tool and its link to culture. This paper postulates that conflict results from two factors: 'face-considerations' and students' definition of tutorials within an 'inadequate' cultural framework. Their framework makes no distinction between the constructions of face in the wide and narrow contexts of town and gown respectively. It also recognises an 'Expert-Novice' relationship within which information flows uni-directionally from the first participant to the second. This pattern is in consonance with the power-structure of the larger speech community of which universities form a component. But there is an unacknowledged sub-culture area within the domain which I shall call the 'Equal Opportunity Zone' (EOZ, e.g. tutorial classrooms) in which information should move bi-directionally ('Tutee<->Tutee<->Tutor'). Here, unlike in the first, town and gown diverge in their power-structure patterns in that some power and control devolve on the students. This paper describes the culture-pedagogy conflict and concludes that this may be resolved by characterising the sociolinguistic domain of education in such a way that the tutorial classroom is seen as a sub-cultural context with its own appropriateness rules.

Keywords: pedagogy, sociolinguistics, culture, face, power.

Abbreviated Title: Culture and Pedagogy in Conflict.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The interplay of language, culture and the classroom in discourse and interaction management is both interesting and complex. There have been studies of the relationship between classroom and culture in foreign language learning and teaching (Brooks, 1986), between language and culture (Fishman, 1994; Holliday, 1994) and language acquisition and formal classrooms (Lewis and Mount, 1988). However, an investigation of the tripartite relationship between language, culture and the variable classroom seems to be a less favoured but equally important research subject. The decision to employ a sociolinguistic paradigm in discussing students' performance in tutorials stems from a conviction that the classroom is, like all other contexts of social interaction in the domain of education, defined by the factors of participant, topic and place (Fishman, 1972; Trudgill, 1974). Expectedly, the classroom as a 'place' will be distinct from other 'places' in terms of the nature and form that interaction takes in it. But within this context of interaction, it is then expected that 'purpose' will introduce another dimension of distinction so that the interaction patterns of lecture rooms differ from those of tutorial rooms. In the same manner, libraries, student canteens, laboratories, halls of residence etc. may also show variations in student verbal behaviour, being sub-culture areas within the same domain. The paper attempts a bifocal analysis by identifying Face and Social Structuring (power distribution) as underlying the culture-pedagogy conflict. In this essay, Face will refer to the base-level dignity and respectability that individuals and groups seek to defend instinctively as operators within a social framework.

Tutorials are expected to offer opportunities of more intense involvement to small groups of students as a follow-up on the topic of a particular lecture and under the close supervision of a tutor. In this regard, 'face' becomes an issue in the tutorial classroom and may play a significant role in shaping the communicative and interactive context. Its effect is minimal in the lecture room because of the Expert-Novice structure which means that authority traditionally lies with and is exercised by the lecturer who is also the focus while students are silent participants or recipients. In

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such a situation, if there is any threat to face, the victims are the lecturers because the views and facts they express may be treated as performance-indicators. However, the deity-like status of lecturers in some cultures extends beyond the confines of the classroom and reduces the probability of such threatening situations arising.

The situation is different in the tutorial classroom. The temporary empowerment of students which invests them with participatory rights comes without the certification and experiential back-up and reverence which lecturers enjoy. In addition, the tutorial-group being of a smaller size loses the mask which the mass attendance of lecture theatres provide and the spotlight is more focused, with a corresponding increase in the degree of threat to face. Thus, a lack of confidence may become evident in the behaviours of empowered students which may not be obvious in lecturers. On the other hand, it may be argued that lecturers confront a potentially greater threat to face in the lecture theatre than students do in the tutorial classroom because of the larger number of witnesses or 'evaluators' and therefore the wider 'spread' of the damage. In the remaining sections of this paper, I shall discuss the conflict I have identified as existing between culture and pedagogy and attempt to determine the contributions of face and other factors to student hesitance in the language tutorial classroom.

2.0 DOMAINS AND LANGUAGE BEHAVIOUR

I have argued elsewhere (Omoniyi, 1994) that the traditional domains set aside in many sociolinguistic investigations (Fishman 1965; Greenfield 1968; Parasher 1980; Robinson 1991) may not be rigidly characterisable after all. I demonstrated how within the Idiroko/Igolo subsystem speech community on the Nigeria-Benin border interaction contexts occupy different points on a domain continuum and continuously change their positions on it as they are reconstituted. Changes in participant composition could switch the most formal of contexts or domains into informal ones. Similarly, participants orchestrate a pendulum-like swing between contexts, roles and language choices to suit different identity needs. Against this background, I shall argue

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in this paper that the domains of education and relationships are not two independent domains in the sense, for instance, that they have been described by Parasher (1980) in his Indian study. There is a degree of interconnectedness between communicative cohorts such that it is difficult to neatly and exclusively delineate them. Participants, in negotiating the different identities that their roles within these domains confer on them, necessarily exhibit different language behaviours. The task that then arises is to determine whether contexts are properly defined so that appropriate participant-identities and their corresponding language behaviour can be foregrounded; whether all the operators within the domains in question understand that there are indeed subculture areas within which power distribution varies between participants. My view of this is that a misunderstanding of the power-structure of the tutorial classroom is partly responsible for stu nts' hesitation to participate in it. But this view is based on the realisation that the social-culture of the larger society filters through into the university system and so there may be other external factors at work as well.

The study upon which my discussion is based was first inspired by an observation of what appears to be marked differences in social distance between teachers and students, and the distribution of power in the sociolinguistic domain of education between Nigerian and British universities.[2] Deference norms (and similarly, politeness and formality) mark the social and cultural 'subordination' of the student to the lecturer and the concentration of power in the latter's hands in communicative exchanges. To some extent, culture still makes children listeners rather than speakers in those contexts they share with older folks in the Nigerian society (personal observation). It was taboo for younger or socially subordinate persons to initiate interactions. The older participants have the prerogative of determining the shape and direction of interaction, except when they become too old to bear such a responsibility for as Shakespeare said, 'man is twice a child'. This arrangement is changing gradually.

Furthermore, in an interaction, the younger participant may not challenge the correctness or truth-value of claims made by the older at least not bluntly or publicly. There are facilities in society's communicative repertoire which may be explored to

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reveal such convictions without appearing to threaten an older participant's face or better still, the face of the authority-figure. An escape route is often provided from potential damage to face. Against this background, it is understandable that students in such cultures may not distinguish between the two levels of role-relationships I described earlier. Essentially therefore, a zone of conflict is created between pedagogy and culture within the education domain thus providing a justification for this kind of investigation.

Classrooms in general may be seen and interpreted as teachers' domain of power in the same way that hospitals will be associated with doctors, courtrooms with judges and religious shrines and temples with priests. These contexts have the 'expert-novice' participant relationship with the expert controlling or dominating the interactions. Thus, inviting students to participate in the tutorial classroom may be construed as an invitation to disrupt the natural direction of information flow and the power alignment it ought to maintain. This supposition is itself predicated upon an error in taking tutor/tutee as a synonymous relationship to lecturer/student. On the other hand, students are obligated to carry out lecturers' instructions and may indeed see nominations to participate in or contribute to a tutorial discussion as being in conformity with the norm since the pace and shape of the social intercourse is still being dictated by the lecturer. However, this obligation seems to preclude situations in which there is a potential threat to face if nominated students believe that they lack the 'appropriate response' in which case they could be shown up as 'ignorant' before an entire class. The potential damage to face may or may not increase with the size of the public space and presence involved and I shall expand this later. The two main considerations therefore are those of authorisation to speak in the classroom space and the need to manage the social face so as not to reduce the speaker's dignity, and both of these reflect a culture-pedagogy conflict.

In communal cultures where teachers have the status of loco-parentis in relation to students they are accorded almost the same levels of respect as biological parents. In fact, some children even rever or dread teachers more than their own

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parents. In the British educational setting, this role of the external parent seems to be performed by the institution rather than by individual lecturers. In the former case, all power resides with lecturers unless they delegate otherwise. In the latter case it seems the system has endowed the students with some amount of authority or right to challenge expressed opinions or to air their own views freely. The social processes are thus different. In other words, the British system supports student participation while the communal cultures seem to support student hesitance.

The status barrier and social distance between lecturers and students in the British setting have been worn down even moreso in tutorials than lectures. One of the factors responsible for reducing distance is the 'First Name Culture' upheld on the campuses. In such a situation of familiarity, seeming equality and freedom of participation, the threat to students' face may be assumed to be less probable than in the Nigerian and Singaporean alternative contexts where the 'Deference- or Sir-Culture' seems to be very pervasive. Even the universities, in spite of the rather Western orientation of the educational systems, emphasise the fact of their being sub-sectors of the larger society in this regard. This is one aspect of the conflict between pedagogy and culture; Western education within African and Asian cultural settings. The second aspect has to do with the engagement of hesitation or non-participation as a face-saving device by students during tutorial sessions. Both of these aspectsare expanded in the discussions of the data below.

3.0 PROCEDURE

I designed a questionnaire to elicit information from a stratified sample of 100 students about their individual experiences of and attitudes towards the tutorial classroom. The sample included students from all four levels (Year I to IV) of the Bachelor of Arts with Diploma in Education programme at the School of Arts, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Informal interviews were conducted with faculty to confirm that the observations which led to this investigation were not peculiar to the sets of

students with whom I had been in contact. The data from the 91 questionnaires retrieved from respondents form the basis of the discussions in this paper.

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 Participation:

In order to establish the extent to which students' hesitance towards participating in tutorial sessions can be described as widespread, respondents were asked to report their frequency of participation at such sessions. Anonymity was relied upon for students to make a sincere report of their experiences. I considered that participation could not be discussed simply in terms of a dichotomy between those who do or do not, but in terms of degrees of involvement since, sometimes, lecturers nominate students and the latter would be obliged to respond on such occasions. The distribution is shown in Table 1 below.

INSERT TABLE 1

This distribution seems to over-report students' participation judging from my initial observation, but even at that, it does not approximate the mark of a successful tutorial session. The data do not reveal the degree of enthusiasm with which students regard tutorials. In order to do this, there needs to be an indication of how the reported participation come about. There are two categories of students; those who are coerced by lecturers through nomination and those who volunteer of their own free will. This distinction is important as it is in the ranks of those who have to be coerced that the conflict between culture and pedagogy is more apparent. Consistent with the claims reported in Table 1, Table 2 shows how respondents reported the chances that they would volunteer answers to tutorial questions.

INSERT TABLE 2.

Only 3 of the 91 respondents fit the specifications required for a successful tutorial session by indicating a 100% chance of volunteering an answer. This reflects the

observation that most times the same individuals dominate tutorial discussions. Twenty-one of the respondents claimed there is a 75% chance that they would volunteer a response, 47 reported a 50% chance, 16 claimed 25% and 4 indicated 0% chance of volunteering. Since students can only volunteer the knowledge they possess, it can be argued that some of the cases of student hesitation may indeed result from lack of knowledge. In that case, nominations may pose a challenge to students' face. But in order to determine the extent to which either culture-pedagogy conflict or lack of information accounted for students' non-participation, I asked them to indicate how often they had not volunteered responses even though they had answers to questions. Table 3 shows the response patterns.

INSERT TABLE 3.

From the table, 66 respondents claim $\geq$ 50% frequency of refusal to volunteer answers in spite of possessing an appropriate response. This represents the degree of non-participation that may be accounted for by the space and social power aspect of the conflict between culture and pedagogy. These are the respondents who would answer tutorial questions when they have been properly 'invested' with the authority to do so by the presiding lecturer.

4.2 Explaining Face-Determined Non-participation:

It is necessary in explaining face-determined non-participation to first establish whether students see the tutorial as an effective pedagogical method of evaluating the degree of success attained in lecture deliveries and therefore relevant and desirable. They were asked to indicate the extent to which they thought tutorial discussions were beneficial to them. Twenty of them said they found such discussions to be 100% beneficial, 42 scored it 75%, 19 felt it was 50% beneficial and 5 only rated it as 25% relevant. None of the respondents reported 0% for it. This can be regarded as a general indication that students recognise tutorials as a useful pedagogical tool. With this information in hand, I shall now proceed to investigate the issue of non-participation further.

Six factors were identified as probable causes of student non-participation in the classroom: shame, ignorance, smartness, face-saving, 'blur'[3] and irresponsibility. Students were asked on a five-point percentage scale to indicate the extent to which their non-participation in a tutorial is accounted for by these factors. The outcome presented in Table 4 below shows that the various factors contribute to student behaviour to a certain degree. Face, however, received the highest percentage.

INSERT TABLE 4.

The factors in the table fall into two categories: threat factors (shame, face) and personality factors (ignorance, smartness, blur, irresponsibility). The desire to protect face and avoid shame are culturally linked and imply that students are aware that they have a role in the tutorial classroom but their acceptance of this role seems to be dependent upon how they perceive such performance as affecting people's evaluation of them. The challenge is two fold. First, students may be concerned about their understanding of the content of the lecture for which a tutorial is set up and not want to expose this. The second concern is the students' assessment of their expressive ability. Participation may be hindered if students doubt that they have the communicative facility to proffer extended explanations for an issue or concept in the medium of English which is the language of education. Both of these concerns undermine the pedagogic objective of tutorials which includes reinforcing or correcting students' interpretation of issues from a lecture or their presentation of reactions to same. Only the opinions which are given expression can be subjected to any critical processing with a view to helping students to achieve a better understanding.

Personality Factors and Threat Factors differ from each other in their respective manifestations. The first manifest as personal attributes while the second manifest as societal impact on the person.[4] Again, these fall into two categories. The former includes 'ignorance' and 'blur' and may be seen as the characterisation of a cognitive state or the result of some physiological condition. Ordinarily, the latter factor may be construed as denoting stupidity, however, within the social culture it is

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also regarded as a basic tenet of the philosophy of kiasuism; (explained as thinking smart while acting 'blur' - stupid), in which case it must be interpreted as connoting the opposite of its denotation. The second category, 'irresponsible' and 'smart' are attitudinal and behavioural. I associate 'smart' with a cunning refusal to divulge or share knowledge and in this interpretation lies a possible connection to 'blur'. There is, of course, also the alternative interpretation of 'smart' as cleverly dodging exposing one's ignorance of the issues by rejecting a nomination to contribute; this is related again in a way to 'blur'. The implication of such an association is that both factors could be tackled by the same solution. The statistical mean for factors in each of the two main factor-categories support this sub-grouping; Ignorant = 39.01 versus Blur = 38.46; Smart = 28.85 versus Irresponsible = 28.85. There is no doubt that these personality factors detract from the effective running of tutorial sessions, however, they are outside the scope of the current assignment.

4.3 Evidence of Conflict:

In the preceding section, I showed that there are two possible types of factors which may result in unsuccessful language tutorial sessions one of which is strongly linked to cultural perceptions. In this section, I shall provide further statistical evidence of the conflict between culture and pedagogy in a bid to demonstrate the different issues to be addressed in attempting to proffer an effective solution.

It may be argued that Singapore as a global city has been opened up to substantial cultural diffusion including plenty of influence from the colonial patriarch, Britain.[5] However, an attempt is still being made, both at individual and state levels, to protect some salient traditional values amidst all the transformation and transition that is taking place. With regard to the status-relationship between lecturers and students, 42 of the 91 respondents in the study claimed that their perception of the lecturer still reflected a cultural toning fifty-percent of the time. In other words, for this group, lecturers still retained, half of the time, the reverence with which they have been traditionally regarded. Eleven reported that such reverence was only held 25% of the

time while 19 respondents said they revered lecturers 75% of the time. The remaining seven did so all the time (100%). A similar pattern of distribution is observed when respondents were asked to state the extent to which they thought it was right to challenge a lecturer's viewpoint. The logic behind the question was that those who revered lecturers were less likely to consider it right to challenge their views. Forty-four respondents said it was fifty-percent right to do so, 13 thought it was 100% right, 18 said 75%, 15 said 25% and one respondent indicated that it was not right at all. The response patterns for both of these questionnaire items seem to suggest that there is some amount of liberal attitude on the part of students with regard to how they perceive of lecturers' status. This being the case, it may be difficult to argue that students' hesitation stems substantially from seeing lecturers on a cultural pedestal and thus interpreting verbal participation in the classroom as usurping the latter's 'birth right'. One plausible explanation thus may be that students have generated a set of appropriateness rules for language behaviour in a classroom which accommodates minimal student in-put and lecturer-centredness. From this perspective, non-participation in tutorial sessions would, therefore, not be seen as deviant. This reasoning is supported by the fact that 35 of the respondents in the study thought it was not irresponsible not to participate in tutorials while 22 rated it as only 25% irresponsible (see Table 1).

Table 5 below shows respondents' reaction to the suggestion that their refusal of a nomination to answer questions in class could have stemmed from a fear of embarrassment or a desire to protect their dignity and not show up their ignorance (save face).

INSERT TABLE 5.

These figures do not indicate that fear of embarrassment is as strong a reason for rejecting a nomination as wanting to protect face. This is interesting, however, since the fear of embarrassment is often associated with a desire to protect 'face'. There is some disparity between the figures especially for the 50%, 25% and 0% frequencies, in

spite of the relationship of partial synonymy between the two reasons. But there is also the possibility that respondents had linked embarrassment to 'shyness' in which case the figures may not be treated as information that they lack knowledge in the first place. Consequently, there is no threat to face to guard against, a fact which separates the two factors tested. Saving face means that the saver is attempting to avoid potential ridicule which can only result in this case from a display of ignorance through answering wrongly.

That students' may have a culture-spiked notion of the pedagogic purpose of tutorials is suggested by their hesitation to express individual opinions on issues unless they were certain that these were correct (Table 6). A tutorial session ought to be construed as providing a testing ground for novel ideas, and alternative individual expansions and re-interpretations of concepts rather than a rehash of the opinions from the original lecture by the lecturer. Sometimes, these sessions may simply be concerned with finding practical and local illustrations for linguistic theories derived from the findings of studies in some foreign communities. This function is especially important because students then become aware of the limitations of certain theories and the peculiarities of their own society (see Table 7).

INSERT TABLE 6.

As many as 72 of the respondents would volunteer a response $\leq 50\%$ of the time in tutorial if they doubted its 'correctness'. Only three said they would throw their possibly incorrect response open for debate. Sixteen respondents indicated that they would act in the same way 75% of the time. 44 respondents completely ruled out the possibility of venturing to give an answer they were not certain was correct in a public lecture compared to 13 who felt the same way about tutorials. This is a wide margin of difference. The distribution is weighted against the spirit of what constitutes a successful tutorial although it seems better for tutorials than for public lectures in which only 3 fall within the $\geq 75\%$ group. This may be a pointer to the fact that context interpretation is an issue here. The disparity is very pronounced in the 75%,

50% and 0% frequency-categories. The implication of the pattern differences is that public lectures present students with a lot more pressure and a greater need to protect face than the tutorial classroom does. These two contexts were further differentiated when respondents were asked to indicate how much they would employ an 'I-don't-know' response in order to forestall the threat to face in an incorrect answer. Table 7 below shows this distribution.

Anonymity often reduces the severity of threat to face so that people are less concerned about their self-image in places where they are not known. However, it has two dimensions to it. First, people driven by a competitive spirit are likely to consider the impact of behaviour or performance on ego as an issue for concern especially in places where ego has relevance. Thus, public lectures may not be as threatening a context for ego as tutorial sessions are. Alternatively, non-competitive ego may decide that posturing is not necessary in the tutorial classroom since all participants share some degree of familiarity, whereas, in contrast, there is a need to be on guard in a public lecture where participants may be total strangers with assessments of ego being based solely on a once-only behaviour and performance.

INSERT TABLE 7.

Looking at the number of respondents with 100%, 75% and 50% employment of the protective 'I-don't-know' response, it appears that the second dimension of anonymity is at work. For public lectures, there were 20 respondents in the $\geq$ 75% category as against 7 for tutorials. Similarly, more respondents reported less percentage employment of this face-protection response for tutorials than for public lectures.

In response to another questionnaire item, the distinction between contexts with reference to the amount of potential threat posed to face was more elaborate. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they considered it embarrassing not to participate in both public lectures and tutorial sessions and the result is shown in Table 8.

INSERT TABLE 8.

This table shows that more respondents consider it more embarrassing not to participate in tutorials than in public lectures. It seems in this case then that the first dimension of anonymity is the operative one; a departure from the pattern earlier reported. Another way of looking at Tables 7 and 8 is that there is an implicit consonance in not giving 'I-don't-know' answers and believing non-participation in tutorials to be embarrassing. Although the patterns appear to be contradictory at some level, they are also in agreement with the concept of identity negotiation and the phenomenon of a continuum within which contexts are subject to swings and switches which I mentioned briefly at the beginning. One may conclude, first, that students worry about the safety of face when considering the extent of their participation in these contexts and, second, that the amount of threat to face in each context is variable.

I have shown how students' behaviour in the tutorial classroom may be an attempt to protect face. The importance of this factor to the evaluation of the successful implementation of tutorial sessions is further stressed by the fact that students make an effort to promote or enhance face. For example, they reported some percentage of pride in supplying correct answers and confessed that to some extent they would consider answering questions or discussing a subject in order to impress someone, etc. In this connection, two other possible determinants of classroom behaviour include whether or not students 'like' their tutor and how comfortable they are with other members of the tutorial group. Both of these factors may either create positive or negative attitudes which can engender or undermine the efficiency of the tutorial classroom as the case may be. What needs to be explored next is how the data can aid an understanding of the culture-pedagogy conflict from the point of view of optimalising student participation in tutorials.

5.0 INTERPRETATION

The data show that several factors shape students' verbal behaviour in the education domain to varying degrees and in different interaction contexts. In the tutorial

classroom, which is the focus of this paper, I believe that the cultural definition of roles for tutor and tutee has been equated with that for lecturer and student in the lecture theatres and this is why tutorials may turn into re-runs of lectures and remain focused on the tutor. There is also evidence from the data that there are considerations of face in deciding whether or not to contribute to discussions in tutorials. However, non-participation may not be entirely accounted for by students' ignorance of issues arising in the course of discussions since some of the respondents reported (Table 3), and I observed too, that they knew the responses to certain questions but only responded if they were nominated by the tutor.

6.0 SUGGESTIONS

6.1 Restructuring the interface:

From the discussions in the preceding sections, a need arises to reconstruct the interface between culture and pedagogy in such a way that the relevance and conduct of tutorial sessions is established, especially for the language and linguistics courses because of the way in which these impact on all other courses. As a method of expanding and clarifying issues raised in lectures, tutorials need to be re-modelled such that students' perceptions of the forum and its purpose may be geared towards enhancing a more rewarding output. Associating university students with a capacity for independent work underlies the philosophy for recontextualising tutorial sessions as separate from lecture sessions.

6.2 Context

In the same way as sub-speech communities are delineated within larger social interaction units, the domain of education is to be considered as comprising of different contexts with different role-relationships which may be seen as constituting sub-domains (cf. Parasher 1980). The determination of appropriate behaviour may therefore vary between contexts. In the context of formal lectures, the lecturer would remain the focus and dictate the direction and shape of the interaction. In tutorial

sessions, however, since the major objectives are to evaluate tutees' comprehension of lecture themes and engage them in more detailed analysis of issues, it is logical that the context should be student-centred. The context must be taken as an Equal Opportunity Zone within which all tutees have a right of participation and a right to be heard. As mature participants, they must also learn to anticipate and accept that others can react as they desire to any contributions. If these are established as norms within the education domain, tutees will lose existing inhibition and participate more in tutorials.

6.3 The Tutorial Classroom

One way to reduce the focus on the tutor in the tutorial classroom is for the seating arrangement to be re-ordered. Adler (1993: 88f) argues that various contexts including the physical are intervening variables in students' test achievements. In a similar vein, I believe that the physical attributes of the classroom affect students perception and behaviour. For instance, the tutor's 'front-of-the-class' position has connotations of authority and may restrain students from freely volunteering solutions or ideas from their less vantage position behind desks. Perhaps a kind of top-bottom 'convergence' which puts the tutor behind a desk and in the midst of students thus breaking down social barriers may remove such restrictions.

6.4 The Student-Tutor

Besides the change in physical and structural arrangement of the classroom, a procedural modification may also be useful in reorientating students. In order to assist students in the readjustment process, tutorials may be organised so that sections of the curriculum content to be covered in a programme are assigned to different students who would then lead tutorial discussions after the main lectures have been given. This is similar to the seminar system which is popular in North America. (The enthusiasm and commitment displayed by students in the Third-Year Sociolinguistics course in which this approach was used is an indication of its potential.) But with reference to Section 6.3 above, student-tutors may feel that they are placed under immense

pressures if they have to take the traditional position in front of the class; teaching practice sessions are not the same because the 'recipients' are less equipped to challenge their views or 'detect incompetence' and consequently pose a less threat to face. It must be remarked that there is still a tendency within the student-tutor framework for some students to restrict their contributions to those sessions for which they themselves are responsible. The presence of the lecturer as a participant within the context remains a hindrance for some. Role-options that may be considered to ease this problem include those of observer, moderator and facilitator. Furthermore, the shortcoming can be corrected by adopting a method of continuous assessment based on continuous participation. Particularly for the trainee-teacher, the importance of attaining oral proficiency and class control which this method provides a training in cannot be over-emphasised. Tutee-ran tutorials were found to be more exciting and interesting as students buttressed their points with illustrations drawn from experiences they shared and which they were all able to relate to.

6.5 Course Description

Since it appears that students attempt to follow rules and regulations to the letter, it may be worth considering an expansion of the descriptions of language courses on offer to include statements of the number of hours of lecture as well as of tutorials which a student needs to attend as requisites. A stated percentage attendance at lectures and actual verbal participation during tutorial sessions should be built into the syllabus. The roles of lecturers and students in both of these contexts must be clearly defined. These statements will then be seen as part of the overall culture which determines behaviour in the domain.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Relative to other levels of education, tertiary institutions, particularly universities, are expected to cultivate critical and analytical cognitive capabilities in their wards. They are a kind of finishing school in the process of moulding the intellectual individual.

Pedagogically, therefore, tutorials can be seen as performing a function and as a method of facilitating students' independence and mental maturity. The effectiveness of tutorials as a forum depends largely on its conceptualisation within a socio-cultural framework. Role-relationships, norms of verbal behaviour and participation within the domain of education must be worked out such that difference between the component contexts is accommodated. Legitimate threats to face in the domain of education do not necessarily have to be the same as those in the wider cultural context of society and communal cultures such as exist in Singapore and Nigeria can entertain successful tutorial sessions.

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NOTES:

1. This is an off-shoot from a paper I presented at the Regional English Language Centre Seminar on Language and Culture in April 1995 (RELC, Singapore). I thank the National Institute of Education for sponsoring my participation.

2. The references here are basically to my experiences and observations at the University of Reading where I did my doctoral research between 1990 and 1994, the University of Lagos where I taught for almost a decade from 1982 to 1990 and the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore where I am currently teaching.

3. This is a vocabulary item in Colloquial Singapore English also called 'Singlish' by some. It means 'stupid', 'ignorant' or 'empty'.

4. These are not totally exclusive as personality is moulded at least partially by social expectations and reactions.

5. There have been reports of increased 'americanisation' especially since the commencement of the information revolution and exportation of American Youth Culture through music. There is a conscious effort on the part of government to sieve in-coming cultural baggages and safe-guard the society against socially corrupt influences.

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TABLES:

Table 1: <u>Respondents' self-reported % frequency of participation in tutorial sessions</u>

Frequency	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Student total	3	20	43	24	1

Table 2: <u>Distribution of respondents by % chance of volunteering answers</u>.

Frequency	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Student total	3	21	47	16	4

Table 3: <u>Respondents' frequency of unvolunteered but known responses</u>.

Frequency	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Student total	1	33	32	21	4

Table 4: <u>Percentage mean for reasons adduced for non-participation in tutorials %</u>

Reason	Shame	Ignorance	Smartness	Face	Blur	Irresponsibility
Mean	25.3	39.0	28.9	48.1	38.5	28.9

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Table 5: Distribution of respondents by reason for rejection of nomination to participate.

Frequency	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Embarrass	5	8	19	36	23
Save Face*	6	10	41	25	8

(* 1 missing response.)

Table 6: Respondents' % chance of proffering response when in doubt of its correctness.

Frequency	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Tutorial	3	16	26	33	13
Public Lect.	1	2	7	36	44

Table 7: Frequency of 'I-don't-know' for protection in public lectures and tutorials.

Frequency	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Tutorial	2	5	21	49	13
Public L.	5	15	19	32	18

Table 8: Respondents' assessment of not contributing as embarrassing (%)

Frequency	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Tutorial	6	13	19	32	21
Public L.	0	2	10	28	51

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